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CURSE OF THE
SPAWN
RETURN OF SUTURE PART II

Todd McFarlane & Image Comics Presents

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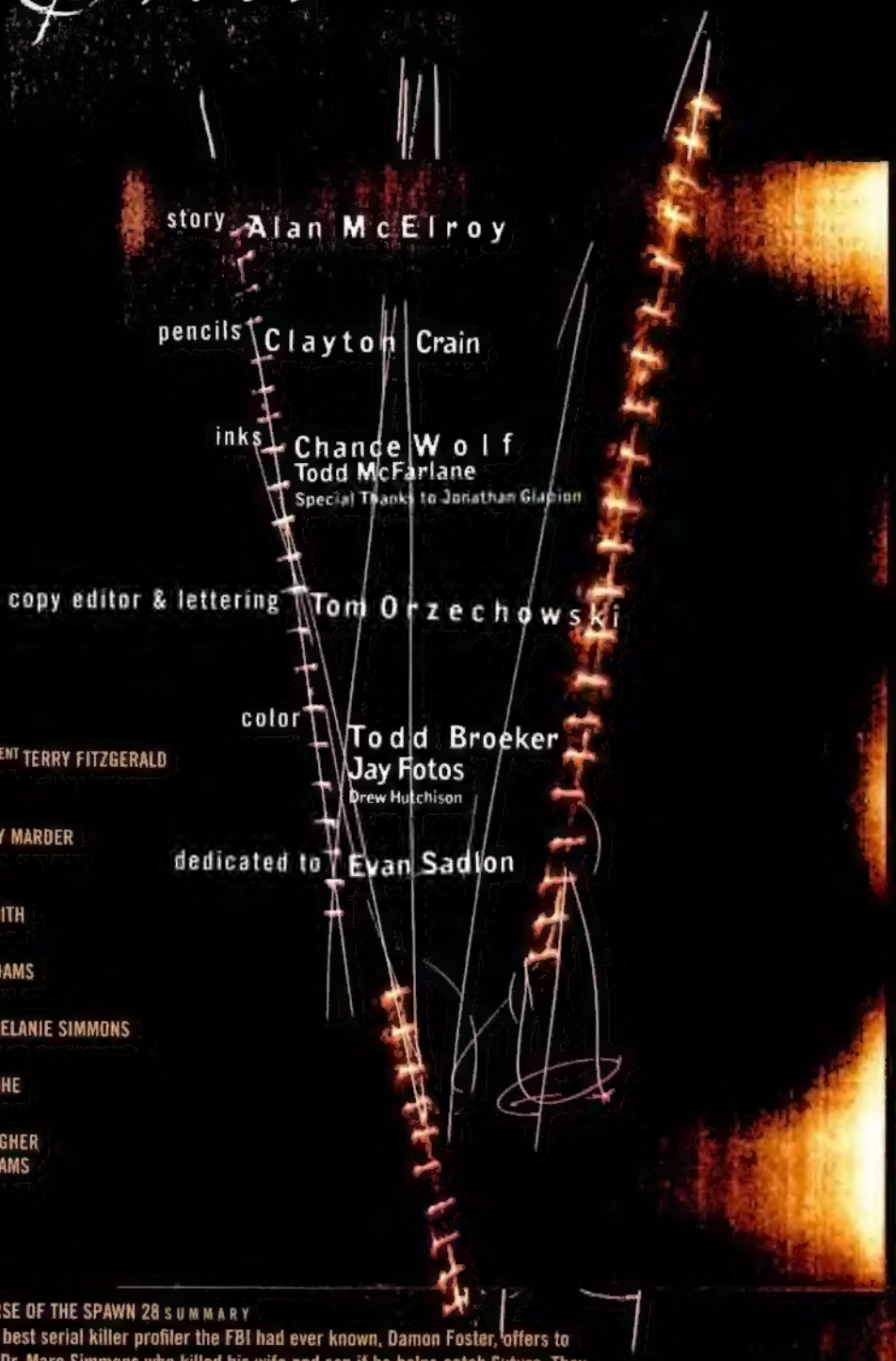

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CURSE OF THE SPAWN 28 SUMMARY

The best serial killer profiler the FBI had ever known, Damon Foster, offers to tell Dr. Marc Simmons who killed his wife and son if he helps catch Suture. They go to Travis Quinn's warehouse on the assumption that Suture will also go there to murder Travis. A three-way confrontation ensues; Foster dies before revealing the Simmons' family killer and Suture kills Travis before disappearing again.

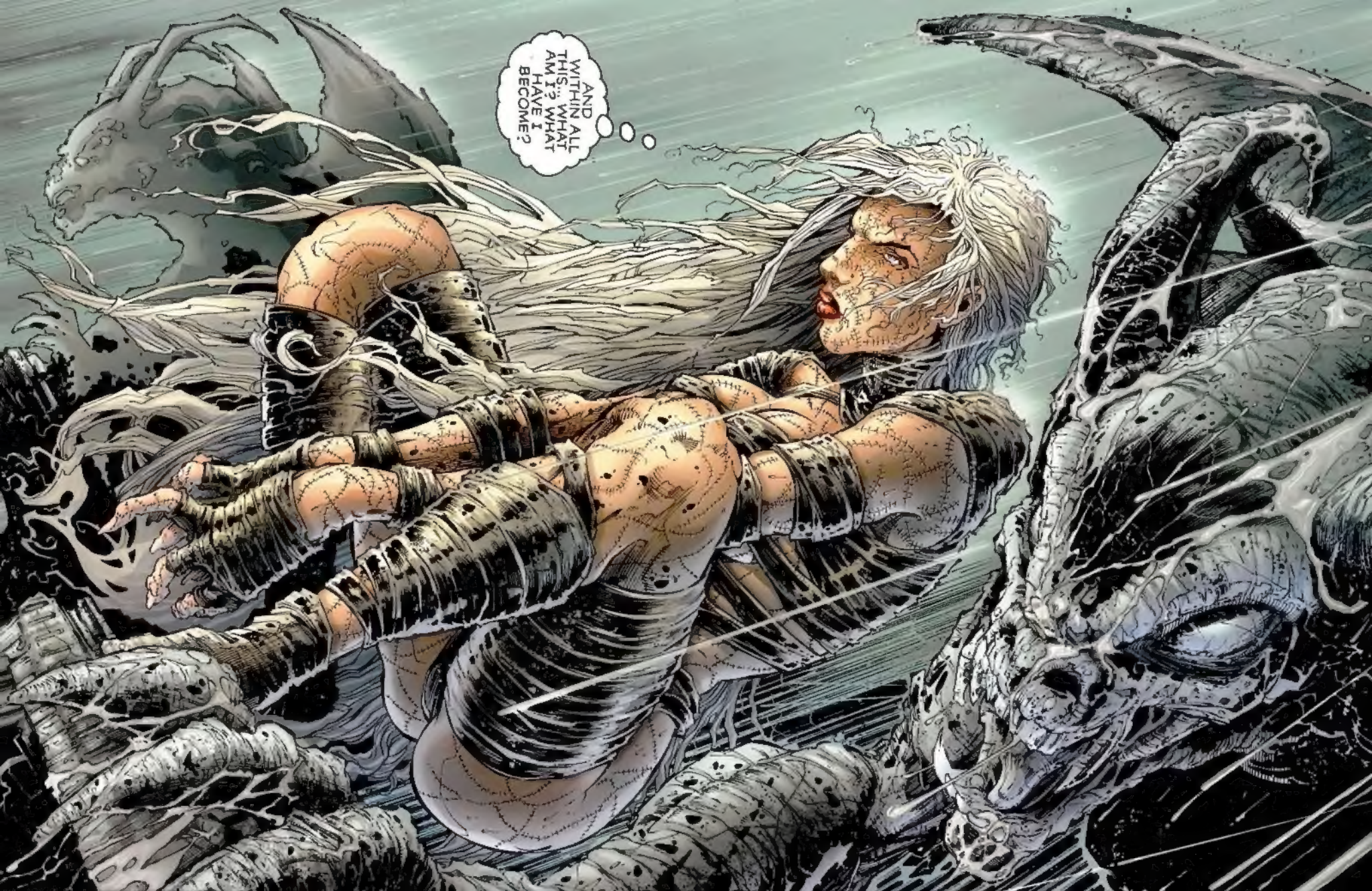
CURSE OF THE SPAWN

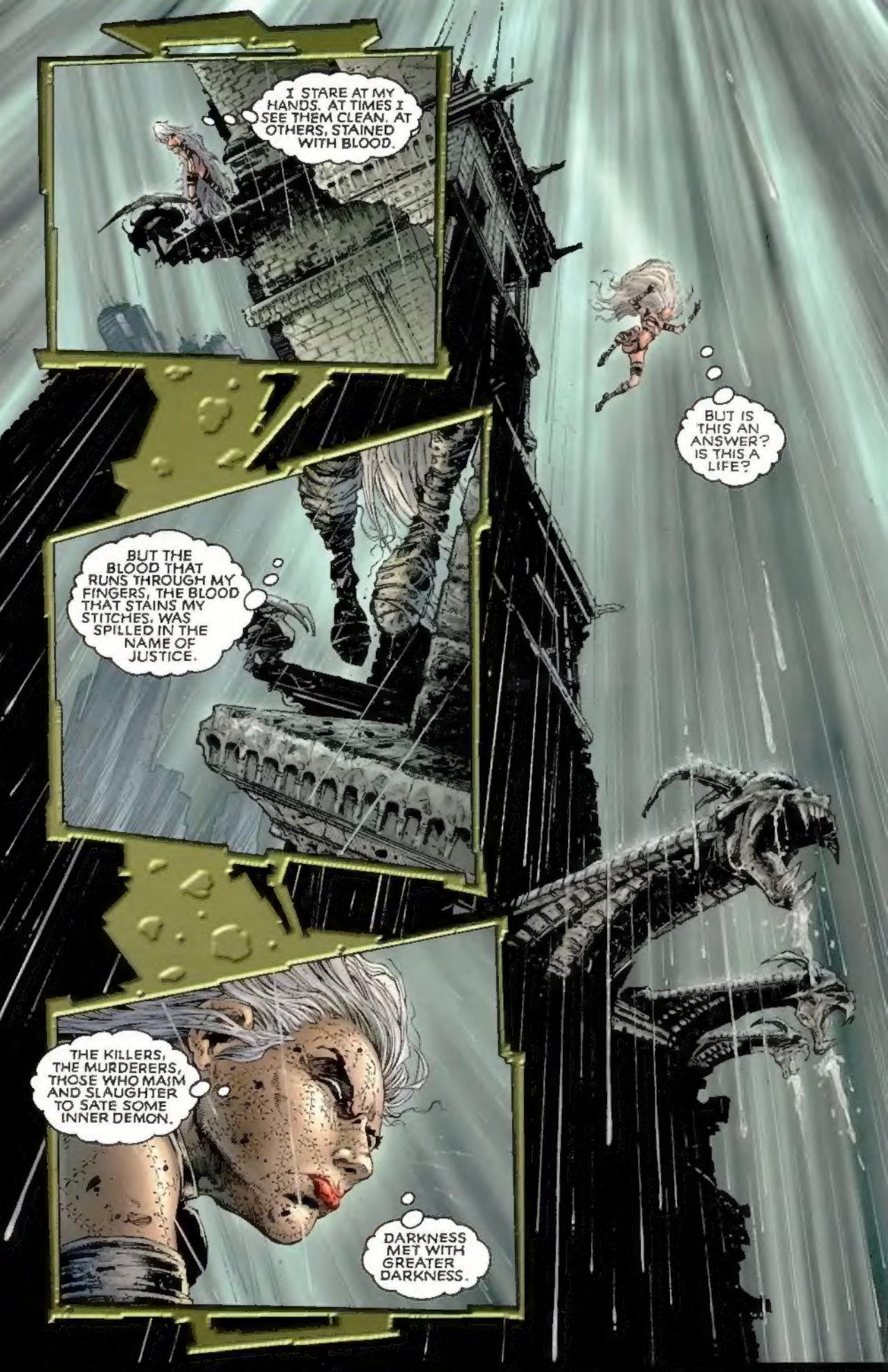
TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

www.spawn.com

CURSE OF THE SPAWN #28 February, 1999. First Printing. Published by IMAGE COMICS 1440 N. Harbor Boulevard, Suite 305, Fullerton, CA 92635. $1.95 US/$2.95 CAN. Spawn, its logo and its symbol are registered trademarks 1999 of Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All other related characters are TM and © 1999 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Todd McFarlane. PRINTED IN CANADA.

A WORLD OF DREAD.
WHERE THE FEARFUL LIVE INSIDE TOWERING TOMBSTONES.
MONUMENTS TO THE EVER DESCENDING GUILLOTINE OF THEIR MORTALITY.
I WEEP FOR THESE DARKEST DAYS. THEY WALK, THEY TALK, AND YET... THEY KNOW NOT WHERE THEY GO...


AND WITHIN ALL THIS... WHAT AM I? WHAT HAVE I BECOME?


I STARE AT MY HANDS. AT TIMES I SEE THEM CLEAN. AT OTHERS, STAINED WITH BLOOD.
BUT IS THIS AN ANSWER? IS THIS A LIFE?
BUT THE BLOOD THAT RUNS THROUGH MY FINGERS, THE BLOOD THAT STAINS MY STITCHES, WAS SPILLED IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE.
THE KILLERS, THE MURDERERS, THOSE WHO MAIM AND SLAUGHTER TO SATE SOME INNER DEMON.
DARKNESS MET WITH GREATER DARKNESS.

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BUT THEN THEY COME. THE MEMORIES, LIKE ICICLES DRIVEN INTO MY SPINE.
THEY HAUNT MY EVERY FIBER LIKE SPIDERS THEY CRAWL BEHIND MY EYES.
I CAN'T KILL THEM AWAY.
NOT ALONE.

DR. IAN SANDERS HAS A BEAUTIFUL WIFE. AN EXQUISITE SEA-SIDE HOME ON LONG ISLAND.
HE HAS MULTIPLE DEGREES IN PSYCHIATRY AND PSYCHO-THERAPY FROM JOHNS HOPKINS AND COLUMBIA.
HE HAS A NATIONAL RADIO CALL-IN SHOW. HIS WORDS HAVE SOOTHED THE MINDS OF MILLIONS.
ON AIR
LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR NEEDS, SUSAN.

DR. IAN SAUNDERS IS AN ISLAND OF SOLACE FOR THOSE ADRIFT IN A SEA OF PAIN.
TAKE YOUR TIME, MEAGAN. WE'LL FIND THE ANSWERS TOGETHER.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
HI, HONEY. I'M RUNNING A LITTLE LATE.
SUSHI SOUNDS GREAT. SEE YOU SOON. I LOVE YOU.
U-STORE
DR. IAN SAUNDERS IS A SKELETON-KEEPER FOR OUR AGE.

BUT WHERE DO THE SKELETON-KEEPERS KEEP SKELETONS OF THEIR OWN?
WHERE DO THEY BURY THE DEMONS WE FOIST UPON THEM?
HELLO MY DARLINGS. I HOPE I WASN'T AWAY TOO LONG.
IF I WAS, I DEEPLY APOLOGIZE.

BUT I'M HERE NOW.
AND OH HOW I'VE MISSED YOU ALL... MY BABIES, MY LOVES...
DR. IAN SAUNDERS HAS KILLED TWENTY-TWO MEN AND WOMEN.

OH MY GOD--
OH, MY, DID I LEAVE MY DEARS COVERED UP?
NO, DOCTOR. NOT EVEN CLOSE.
Gurgle
WHAM!
DOCTOR ...HEAL THYSELF.

TIME TO AWAKEN FROM YOUR SLUMBER.
THE CURTAINS HAVE BEEN THROWN OPEN. THE SUN SHINES DOWN ON YOUR DAMNATION.
"THE DEVIL WILL DRAG YOU UNDER." SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT AS A CHILD.
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. IT'S BEEN ON THE NEWS, IN THE PAPERS.
YOU ARE "THE HEADHUNTER."
YOU DECAPITATE YOUR VICTIMS, DO UNSPEAKABLE THINGS TO THEIR REMAINS... AND LEAVE NO TRACES BEHIND.
NO

THE NYPD AND FBI HAVE NO LEADS. BUT THE EVIDENCE IS IN THAT U-STOR-IT. THE MISSING HEADS. YOUR TROPHIES.
EACH ONE A FREE TICKET TO THE STEEL ROOM WITH THE DROP PELLETS AND NO VENTI-LATION.
NO! GET AWAY FROM ME.
LET ME OUT OF HERE!
Oh GOD..
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE TOO. THE LEGENDARY KILLER OF KILLERS THE BLACK-EST ANGEL THE LORD S VENGEANCE HAS TO OFFER A VILE WORLD SUCH AS THIS TORN APART, REMADE. A LIVING EXAMPLE OF ALL OUR MOST HEINOUS ILLS..
SUTURE...
I'D PRAYED YOU WERE JUST A MYTH AN URBAN LEGEND. WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE? WHY DIDN'T YOU KILL ME IN THE GARAGE?

I'M TIRED OF THE BLOODSHED THE KILLING. I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM ANY-MORE.
AM I THE PERSON I WAS?
AM I GRETCHEN? OR AM I SOMETHING ELSE?
WILL I EVER GET MY LIFE BACK? I FEEL LIKE I'M AT THE MERCY OF SOMETHING DARK AND TERRIBLE. AND IT DOESN'T WANT TO LET ME GO. NOT EVER
AND THERE'S THE PAIN. I FEEL IT IN EVERY STITCH MORE AND MORE. I WONDER IF IT'S A BACKLASH FROM ALL THE KILLING?
GO ON.
I'M LISTENING

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DIE, BITCH!
THOOF!
KRAAK!
HUH?!
THWAK!
BAM!
IT'S VERY SIMPLE
I AM NOW YOUR PATIENT.
YOU ARE GOING TO CURE ME OF THIS DISEASE THAT IS MY EXISTENCE.

I WANT TO BE WHOLE AGAIN. THAT'S WHAT YOU DO, ISN'T IT? YOU MAKE PEOPLE WHOLE
I'M GIVING YOU JUST 24 HOURS TO CURE ME OF THIS NIGHTMARE LIFE. FAIL AND YOU'VE GOT TWO CHOICES: A PAINFUL DEATH AT MY HANDS, OR I TURN YOU OVER TO THE POLICE
CURE YOU IN A DAY? I CAN'T *DO* IT. IT'S *IMPOSSIBLE*--
YOU CAN LIVE THROUGH A TRIAL. WATCH AS YOUR FAMILY, YOUR REPUTATION, YOUR *LIFE* IS DESTROYED PIECE BY PIECE. ANOTHER KIND OF DEATH
WHACK!
TRY, DAMN YOU!

ALL RIGHT. I CAN DO THIS...
LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING YOUR EARLIEST MEMORIES ..
IT WAS HARD AT FIRST, THEN IT CAME... FASTER AND FASTER. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GRETCHEN CULVER... I TOLD HIM MORE ABOUT MYSELF THAN I THOUGHT I EVER KNEW... A TORRENT OF MEMORIES POWERFUL. AND FRIGHTENING...
LET'S TALK MORE ABOUT THE INCIDENT WITH YOUR FATHER. HOW DID YOU FEEL?
TELL ME WHO YOU WERE.

SOON HE BEGAN TO THREAD, TO CUT, TO SEW, TO PUT TOGETHER A PICTURE OF WHAT I WAS... WHAT I AM. HIS WORDS DESTROYED AND REMADE ME.
AS GRETCHEN CULVER YOU WERE NEVER ALLOWED TO LIVE YOUR OWN LIFE. YOU WERE PUSHED BY OVERZEALOUS PARENTS INTO EQUESTRIAN TRAINING, THEN BALLET.
DRIVEN LIKE AN ANIMAL TOWARD THE JAGGED PINNACLES OF ELITISM. YOUR PARENTS WANTED TO BE KENNEDYS. THEY WANTED TO BE ENVIED, WORSHIPPED BY ALL OTHERS... AND THEY INTENDED TO USE YOU TO ACHIEVE THOSE ENDS.
EVEN WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU'D BECOME YOUR OWN PERSON IN NEW YORK, THEY STEERED YOU TOWARD THE TANNANGER FAMILY... A HEARST-LIKE DYNASTY THAT WOULD LEAD THEM INTO A GALAXY OF WEALTH AND PRESTIGE. YOU WERE NOTHING BUT A TOOL.

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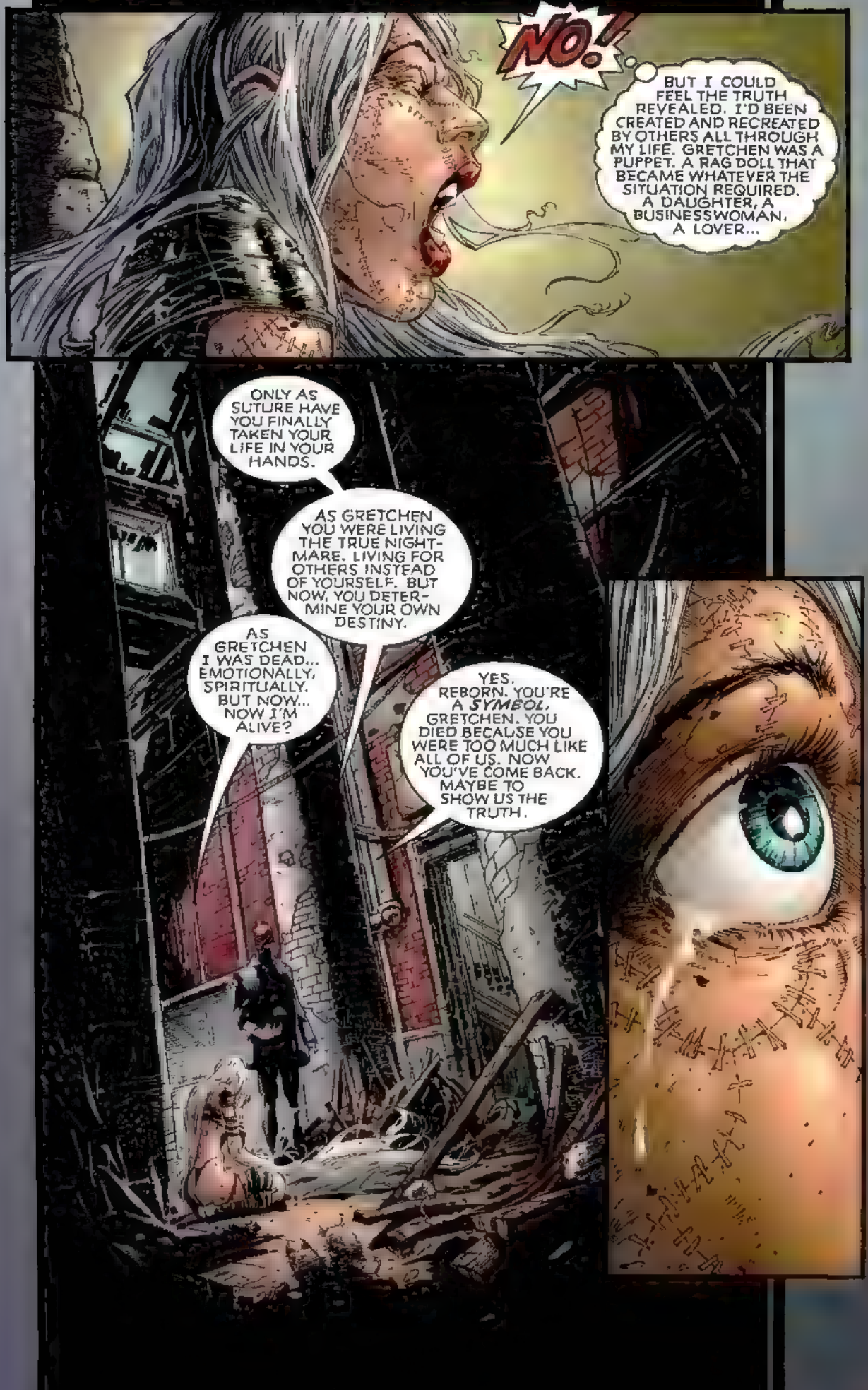
NO!
BUT I COULD FEEL THE TRUTH REVEALED. I'D BEEN CREATED AND RECREATED BY OTHERS ALL THROUGH MY LIFE. GRETCHEN WAS A PUPPET. A RAG DOLL THAT BECAME WHATEVER THE SITUATION REQUIRED. A DAUGHTER, A BUSINESSWOMAN, A LOVER...
ONLY AS SUTURE HAVE YOU FINALLY TAKEN YOUR LIFE IN YOUR HANDS.
AS GRETCHEN YOU WERE LIVING THE TRUE NIGHTMARE. LIVING FOR OTHERS INSTEAD OF YOURSELF. BUT NOW, YOU DETERMINE YOUR OWN DESTINY.
AS GRETCHEN I WAS DEAD... EMOTIONALLY, SPIRITUALLY. BUT NOW... NOW I'M ALIVE?
YES. REBORN. YOU'RE A *SYMBOL*, GRETCHEN. YOU DIED BECAUSE YOU WERE TOO MUCH LIKE ALL OF US. NOW YOU'VE COME BACK. MAYBE TO SHOW US THE TRUTH.

SO, WHAT NOW?
THAT'S UP TO YOU.
GO HOME, SAUNDERS... AND KILL NO MORE.
FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I OPENED MY EYES AND STARED INTO THE FACE OF ODESSA, MY REMAKER, I FEEL DIRECTED. RENEWED. REBORN...
IF YOU DO... I'LL BE WAITING.

FOR SAUNDERS, THE NIGHTMARE ENDS. HE HAS SKIRTED THE EDGE OF DEATH'S SWEEPING SCYTHE.
GO AND KILL NO MORE. SUTURE'S WORDS RING DEEP WITHIN HIS SOUL
SAUNDERS THINKS TO HIMSELF, 'YES, I CAN DO THAT... I CAN REMAKE MYSELF AS WELL. GO AND KILL NO MORE.'"
HE FEELS IT...
...AND BELIEVES THAT HE CAN LET GO.
IAN...?!
JULIE, WHAT'S WRONG?

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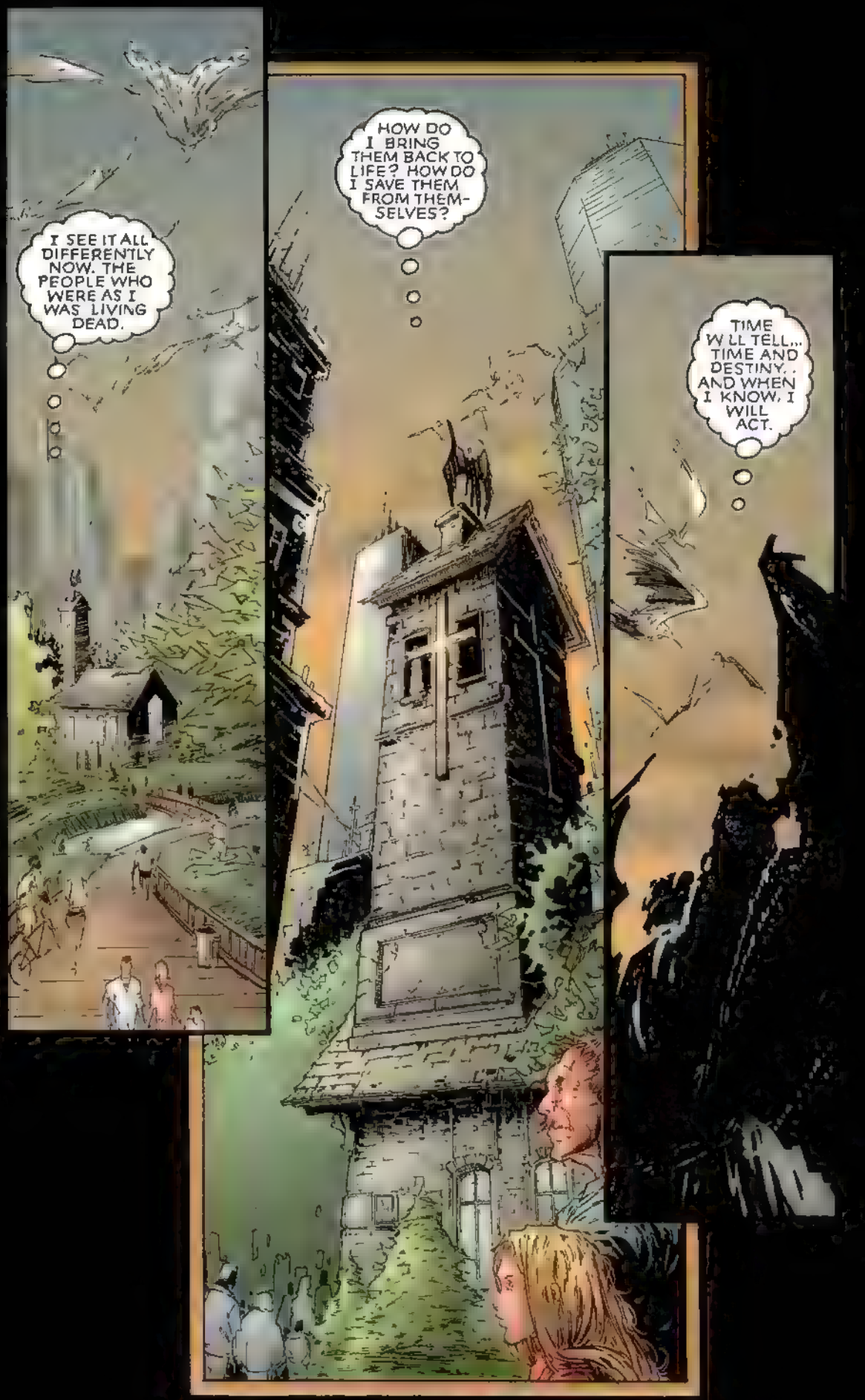
WHEN YOU DIDN'T COME HOME, I CALLED THE POLICE...
THEY FOUND YOUR CAR... AT A U-STOR-IT IN BROOKLYN...
EASY, DOC. IT'S ALL OVER.
IT ISN'T TRUE IT CAN'T BE TRUE TELL THEM, IAN TELL THEM!
GO. AND KILL NO MORE GOD FORGIVE ME


I SEE IT ALL DIFFERENTLY NOW. THE PEOPLE WHO WERE AS I WAS LIVING DEAD.
HOW DO I BRING THEM BACK TO LIFE? HOW DO I SAVE THEM FROM THEM-SELVES?
TIME W LL TELL... TIME AND DESTINY... AND WHEN I KNOW, I WILL ACT.

THIS IS THE LIFE I'VE CHOSEN...

blah blah blah

BlahBlahBlah_75

w/terry fitzgerald

tdfitz@aol.com

Welcome back from the gluttony that is known as Christmas and New Years. We all played it rather low key here in Los Angeles except for the idiot who decided to open fire on thirty cops at our condo complex with two fully automatic M-16s. Yes, he hit a couple of them and yes they turned him into swiss cheese. His brother made a statement saying that the shooter disliked guns and he had no idea why he had them in the first place. God bless America. We are all fine though so there you go.

Good news and award nominations have come upon us lately from several different avenues. The toy designers were graced with three awards so far, with I'm sure a few more to follow before Toy Fair '99. Toy Fare has awarded McFarlane Toys with the "Best Sculpted Figure of the Year" award for the Heap figure from Spawn series 12. Congrats to Ed Frank at McFarlane Design who sculpted the Heap. Ed sculpts one figure a year and wins an award for it. Mind you it took him all year to finish it.

Lee's Action Figure News & Toy Review magazine bestowed upon us the "1998 Golden Toy Award for Best Figure Assortment" for Spawn series 12. This line includes the aforementioned Heap, Spawn 4, Creech, Top Gun, Bottom Line, and Reanimated Spawn, (my personal favorite).

The deluxe boxed Cygor won "Best Sculpted Monkey", also from Toy Fare. They wanted to give it the figure of the year award, but it was a toss up between Cygor and the Heap, so they created a brand new category just for this figure.

Moving on to this company, Todd McFarlane Entertainment here in LA. Todd and I were lucky enough to have been nominated last week for a Grammy! I watched the announcement ceremony on E! earlier that morning when they announced the top ten award categories. After that I left for work, only to arrive here to two or three congratulatory voice messages. They were all very vague other than the usual, "Congratulations, you lucky bastard, blah, blah, blah."

At this point I was getting a little weirded out. So I called my bud Al over at Epic and played it all cool like. He went off for twenty minutes about how he has been in this biz for twenty years, and this was our first, and what this would lead to and on and on and on. Finally I figured it out. Epic had nominated the Pearl Jam "Do the Evolution" video we produced for video of the year and the academy picked it as one of the five contenders for the award. Officially the category is number 94, Best Video Short Form, which is for videos pertaining to single songs, not entire concerts, or multi-song videos. We are up against some stiff competition including Bjork's "Bachlorlette" Aerosmith's "Pink", Madonna's "Ray of Light", and the Oasis video for "All Around the World".

The most interesting thing about the nominations is that the directing team of Dayton Faris, who gave everyone the wonderful Oasis video, is producing the other half of the Korn video we are working on right now! It truly is a small world. If you would like to check out the other nominees in the other categories, please check out "www.grammy.com" and click on "Grammy Nominees."

So officially the entities that are nominated for this category include the band (Pearl Jam), the directors (Todd McFarlane and Kevin Altieri), and the producers (Terry Fitzgerald and Joe Pearson). Congratulations to everyone who worked on the "Evolution" video. We would also like to say good luck to everyone nominated in all categories. Todd and I will be in attendance, so look for us to be walking down the red carpet this February 24th, I believe on CBS. We will be the two dorky guys wearing hockey jerseys!

-until next month
terry fitzgerald

"Epic had nominated the Pearl Jam 'Do the Evolution' video we produced for video of the year."

Here are six images from the Grammy nominated Pearl Jam video, "Do the Evolution"

Curse Words
P.O. Box 27228 Tempe AZ 85285-7228
www.spawn.com

We are pleased to announce the Grammy nomination of Todd McFarlane as video director and Terry Fitzgerald as video producer of Pearl Jam's "Do The Evolution" animated video. The nomination is for "Best Short Form Music Video" category in the 41st Annual Grammy awards. This video has also received more than 40 international artistic awards.

Dear Mr. McFarlane

I have been with the *Curse of the Spawn* since the first issue and I think that it is the greatest comic. This was the first comic I had ever purchased in my life. I just got done reading issue #22 and I thought it was great. As a matter of fact, it was the bomb.

I have a couple of questions about *Curse of the Spawn*. On issue #1-14 the title on the cover was like the original comic book *Spawn*. Now it has changed to a regular print with the "A" halfway cut. Why did you change it and will that title ever come back because that was what attracted me to the comic book? My last question is will you ever have a Special Edition Issue for the *Curse of the Spawn*? If so, when and if not, why not?

Thanks
Sanjeev Ba
Reno, Nevada

Sometimes we do things on the book based upon whether we think it will aesthetically make the book interesting to look at. What we didn't want to do was confuse the readership with the logos being exactly the same thereby saying the books were even close in their story telling style. So we decided to come up with a different logo that would differentiate the two books from each other.

In the future, we may use the same logo in books that tie into each other such as our upcoming new *Spawn* book that will be a compliment to the existing *Spawn* book and will deal with even further stories of the Al Simmons character. This new book is not a random sampling of the different people like you saw in the *Curse of the Spawn* book.

Before we completely put the Curse book to bed forever we will be coming out with a double size Curse Annual that will reintroduce us to the Daniel Lianso character from issue #1. As that progresses forward, we'll give you more information so you can be on the look out for it.

Dear Spawn

Just like the Barnum and Bailey Circus, you have freaks with names that describe their abnormalities and the same goes for 'Crocodile,' a nickname that describes his sickening skin disorder. People can become very hateful of other people who are considered not normal and with the people who have taunted Crocodile, it only stands to reason why he is now filled with rage! After reading *Curse of the Spawn* #26, the image of the serial killer known as the Unknown Soldier placing a hand grenade into the hostage's mouth definitely gave me some chills! This guy is worse than Hannibal "the Cannibal" Lecter!

I must commend Dwayne Turner for his incredible penciling. I love his details! Also, a salute to Alan McElroy for delivering such a traumatic, powerful story!

Sincerely yours
Paul Dale Roberts
Sacramento, California

The interesting thing about giving life to different characters, whether they are in movies, TV, novels, or in this case comic books, is to try to give some motivation behind each one of the people you are trying to portray in a way that could actually happen in real life. I know that Alan has done an intense job in trying to come up with these people whose portrayal of their pain and misery or glowing character traits are at the forefront of the stories.

The one thing people sometimes misconstrue is just because we say or do things in the comic books, we are endorsing some of the morals of the different characters. When you are creating new characters, you just have to make them who they are and make sure they are believable in the stories. You have to be careful and not put any of your personal convictions in the personality of the characters for fear of limiting the range of stories. I think Alan does a great job of that.

Dear Todd McFarlane

I've been reading *Spawn* comic books and *Curse of the Spawn* since the first issues. I really dig *Spawn*. I've read a lot of other comics before *Spawn* finally came out and I think your characters are the best and the most interesting. I've had enough of these super hero dudes who want to bring peace to the world and blah, blah, blah. Anyway, I think it's nice to have a new kind of story around.

The way you and your people are drawing also attracted my attention. I saw an interview you did for the TLC channel. The TV show was called *How'd They Do That*, and during the interview you explained every step and process used to produce a comic book. Very interesting. My question is, I know you guys are actually drawing and inking the pages and then scanning them into a computer to add color. I would really like to know what kind of computer program are you using to add the colors? What is the name of the program and, most importantly, how or where can I get one? I've looked everywhere, asked everyone I could think of by mail and on the internet, without success. You are my last hope. Can you help me?

Thanks for all these incredible drawings and stories. Keep up the good work.

Long time fan
Stephanie Fournier
Montreal, Canada

I hope you enjoyed the process of putting the comic book together. As for your question on how the coloring is done on the computer, the software is a readily available software called Photo Shop for MacIntosh computers.

Although there are other programs you can use to augment that software, the skill lies with the user being able to use the tools provided by Photo Shop. If you look at the software being the equivalent of a pencil, you can put a pencil in ten different people's hands and you'll get a completely different drawing skill level from each of them. The computer is much the same way. Start there with Photo Shop and once you feel confident, you can expand from there.

Todd

Several issues ago you asked for reasons as to whether I buy or do not buy complimentary titles to *Spawn*. I don't. The only reason I can think of is that I really don't care enough about the other characters. They may be good characters, but I look at them as complimentary only. *Spawn* is my main attraction. With *Curse of the Spawn* I must say the art appears top shelf, but again, I'm not interested in acquainting myself with a character for 3-4 issues only. As a matter of fact, if you created another *Spawn* book with Al Simmons, I still probably wouldn't buy it. In a sense, I'm a little completist with no interest in buying multiple titles with the same characters. I'm also fickle. For example, you, Greg and Danny could start drawing another *Spawn* title and get a new creative team work on the original *Spawn* title and the completist in me would continue to buy the original *Spawn* and the fan in me would get your new title for a while. If I grew the least bit dissatisfied with either product, I would stop buying immediately.

In a sense, I want stability, I'm too busy with my personal life to want to worry about too many new titles, variant covers and now this crap with variant insides. That should answer another one of your past questions. Please do not start with variant anything. Please continue to give me consistent quality books. That's all I want. That's all I'll buy.

This is a subtle point but one I want to discuss. I noticed that in the credits you are doing less and less inking. If I remember correctly you haven't even inked the last couple. The quality in art and story are still there so I don't care. I still love the book. Be careful though, it doesn't take much to become dissatisfied in a title. Lets use Silvestri's title *The Darkness* as an example. A dozen or so awesome issues, Marc's art is stunning, then he handpicks a new art team and I'm ready to stop buying it. I'll be loyal to my wife, my friends, even my employer but my hobbies better be loyal to me. Don't rip me off, just make me happy.

Todd, you make me happy. Thanks.

John Lai, Age 32
Toms River, New Jersey

Thanks for your in-depth comments and let's see if we can plow through them. You sound exactly the same as I did when I was collecting comic books. I was a completist and an addict for a lot of the titles. I kept buying them at some point just to make sure I didn't break my run. Other books I picked up sporadically because the story and the artwork happened to trigger something I wanted specifically. I made value judgements on what the company was and what the characters were and the cost of each one of the books as I continued to add to my ever growing list of books I was purchasing.

I also know the worst thing that can happen on a comic book is that you are completely happy with the writing and the artwork and all the other parts of it and one piece of that puzzle decides to go away. That somehow starts a domino effect and the next thing you know, you are left with a book that seems to be a shell of its original self. I went through that many times always hoping that the people I liked on the book would eventually come back but it was never to be. Instead, I had to endure some mediocre story telling until either a better team came along or I lost interest completely and finally broke my collecting streak on that specific title.

Unfortunately, given that we all have things happen in our lives and our time is spent in many different directions, we try to put out as good a product as we can. However, sometimes our personal time dictates whether we can continue to focus on any given project not only today but in the future. Luckily I've been blessed with having lots of good talent around. First with Greg and then Danny Miki and now with Brian Holguin. I'll continue to make sure if any one of the pieces can't be done by myself or one of these three, I'll pick somebody that is suitably up to the task. Thanks for hanging in there. Take care.

Dear Mr. McFarlane,

This letter comes in response to a couple of things I found in issue #74. First off, I have a comment about the letter printed in "The Spawning Ground" from Shane Norwood, whose father wouldn't let him read *Spawn*. In it he asks you to stop with the bad words and devil stuff. As far as the swear words go, I think you are absolutely correct when you say that you are only showing the way back-alley bums would actually talk. I want to be a director, so I established this point with my parents that certain people just talk like this out of habit, not to actually hurt people. I also admire you for the fact that you don't use certain words (i.e. using 'frigging' instead of the other f-word). I am a big fan of the HBO series, but at times the violence and language is just too much.

In the same letter, Shane asks you to take the "devil stuff" out of *Spawn*. While certain things in the book deal with the after life, I would hardly consider it "devil stuff." I'm a Christian and I have had to defend *Spawn* a lot in the same manner that you defend it, it's more about the internal struggles of one man than it is about Hell. As you've pointed out before, most of the people who label *Spawn* as "evil" have probably never even read an issue. It all boils down to one simple point. *Spawn* is purely fiction and as long as you can interpret it as that, you can see it's a great story.

In the same issue, you also asked people to write in and tell why they either like or don't like *Curse of the Spawn*. The reason I ever got into it was because my local bookstore hadn't gotten the latest issue of *Spawn* in yet. It caught my eye, so I read the credits list and found your name under the inker section. I believe. I also saw the name Alan McElroy whom seems very familiar. Could you clarify that?

Anyhow, I thought it was decent, but not nearly as good as *Spawn*. I think the main reason is that I like stories that take place in a setting a lot like the world is now. I really don't like stories that take place very far in the past or future.

I appreciate you reading this letter and giving me hours and hours of entertainment with your comics.

Sincerely,
Daniel Lutz
Orangeburg, South Carolina

Like I was saying in one of the previous letters, showing the characters in the books as being real people is just as important as solving the problem. If you don't have characters anybody cares about, then obviously you don't have a story anybody chooses to continue to invest time, effort and money into. In the case of *Spawn*, it could be more hard core, a lot more raw and R-rated if I chose to do that. I've kept it at what I believe to be a PG-13 book that continues to push the parameters of that box but not completely crossing over into the R setting. I think it's one of the things that may frustrate some people about the book. There are other venues for them to go to (i.e. the HBO series that you said at times is a little too much for you). It's actually just what other people are looking for and they can see Spawn evolve into something a little harsher than the comic book they've read.

As for why the name Alan McElroy seems familiar to you, it's because he was also kind enough to help work on the *Spawn* movie and the *Spawn* HBO series with me. In some respects, he's been there since *Spawn* has gone out to the general public.

In closing, you might want to scan some of the back issues of *Curse of the Spawn* because those books fit the stories you like with the real world settings. Alan has admirably written some that have included Sam and Twitch, a character called Sinture and a few with Antonio Twistelli and the Mafia mob along with a few others that are more down-to-earth rather than stories with fantastic or futuristic story elements.

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

...ing up

How you don't need a video game system to play the hottest title. The Metal Gear Solid Ultra Action Figures feature all the 3-D action, all the excitement, and all the detail of the best-selling title for the Sony Playstation. These figures come complete with weapons and are posable to re-enact your favorite scenes.

Solid Snake is a great guy, and also the name of the character you play in the game. To help you complete your mission, we made sure that Solid Snake is equipped with the best weapons: a SOCOM pistol with laser sight and silencer, a bull pup rifle, a Stinger missile launcher, C-4 explosive charges, night vision goggles, and a gas mask. All you need to supply is moves of steel and a quick boggle finger.

Aiding you on your mission is **Meryl Silverburgh**. This pretty woman is armed with her own weapons: a grappling hook, a Desert Eagle pistol, a bull pup rifle and a knife near her stiletto. She's eminently adept at the fastest fighters (by digital dossier) foes around.

Among your enemies is **Vulcan Raven**. The biggest of the figures, this figure comes with a HUGE 30mm Gatling gun with ammo belt, a backpack and a base.

Revolver Ocelot is also a bad guy. This western terrorist has a long "leather" overcoat, a pair of Colt pistols that fit into a holster and a combination assault rifle/knife. With ball jointed shoulders and articulated wrists and elbows, this quick draw medallion may make the end of your mission if you're not careful.

Ninja is another means of evil. This cyber ninja has an assortment of tools that makes him a formidable opponent. Along with giving him over a dozen points of articulation, he has two different right arms, depending on whether he chooses to fight with his cyber blade or his rifle arm. Just two interchangeable hands.

Psycho Mantis doesn't NEED a weapon to attack you. Whether he's wearing his gas mask or not, his mental powers can attack without warning. He comes with an orb, an energy ball, a burst and a base.

Sniper Wolf is a wolf in fox clothing and she's as deadly as she is beautiful. If this figure isn't dangerous enough with her sniper rifle, she also comes with an attack wolf!

The final boss is **Liquid Snake**. He's a clone of you, with all the same powers but with a MUCH worse attitude. This figure comes with night vision goggles, a SOCOM pistol with laser sight and silencer, a bull pup rifle, a pair of dog tags and a base to re-enact the final battle.

So get to your store. Metal Gear Solid is SOLID ENTERTAINMENT and the TOYS ARE SOLID FUN!

...ow from customers not e-mailed us asking about the best way to store his figures. He currently keeps them in the attic in a cardboard box. This is probably not a good place to keep them due to the temperature extremes. The heat will cause problems with the glue on the cards while the cold will make much of the plastic brittle. The cardboard box isn't too much of a problem as long as you don't have any leaks up there, but you might want to see about getting the boxes somewhere a little more moderate in temperature.

Russell Spears of Marietta, Georgia, wrote in asking why the Collector's Club doesn't sell exclusive items at the same time as comic stores do. Well, the club was started to enable you to get toys you may have MISSED, along with special figures that only the club provides. We don't want to compete with any store, especially your local comic shop. So all store exclusives have at LEAST a four-month window before the club solicits them. Then if you STILL need it, you can get it through us. We want to supplement the stores, not replace them.

Joseph Gordero from Brooklyn, New York, suggested we put the list of accessories on the front of each toy so people know that (for instance) the Dark Ages Ogre comes with EITHER the club or the mace, but not both. However, on toys like the Ogre (or Spawn IV: Arsenal of Doom), we'd have to make two sets of stickers for the figures and hope that the factory puts the right one on each. Our current tactic is to put the appropriate instructions for BOTH versions on the back. But it is a good idea, and we'll consider it. For sending us the idea, you ...won this month's Diamond Green Cosmic Angela.

You too can win a free collectable Green Cosmic Angela. Simply send your comment, suggestion, picture, or thoughts about our figures to:

Spawn EndCap
P.O. Box 27228
Tempe, AZ 85285-7228
E-mail: McFToyClub@aol.com

Psycho Ma...

EndCap 80

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TODD MCFARLANE'S

Spawn

Violence flashes across the screen. A man-turned-monster begs for a chance to be human one more time. One more chance to visit the ones he loves. One more moment in the arms of his beautiful wife. But the transformation is difficult. It's a horrible metamorphosis as the hell-born cape wraps around the monster/hero known as Spawn and begins to turn him once again into the man called Al Simmons. The transformation is painful. The transformation is agony. But not agonizing enough for Todd McFarlane.

As he watches the images from an upcoming episode of the HBO Spawn Animated Series, McFarlane stops the rough-cut tape and watches the transformation scene once more. When he sees an image that sums up what he wants the scene to say, he says freeze. The image shows Spawn shuddering, shaking, quivering just moments before temporarily turning human.

"That's what the whole change should be like," Todd comments. "The change is agonizing." Everybody in the room nods, makes notes. Nobody objects. He's right, and we all know it. It's exactly what the scene calls for. That's the kind of hands-on attention Todd McFarlane gives to the projects that bear his name, and the third season of the HBO Spawn animated series will be no different. But Todd is quick to point out that while he plans to be a hundred places at once, he and his creation Spawn get a lot of help from others.

"Don't let that mislead you," says Todd of his hands-on approach. "A lot of the work is done over the phone, and through people making me stuff. I'm usually in town only once a week, so I rely heavily on those people who are there in the trenches, and are there around the clock making sure that all the things I want to see actually get done. I'm still the spiritual leader and still give the directions, and sign off on everything."

"When I come in we do a lot of constructive stuff, but there is a lot of busy work that has to be done tomorrow, and I won't actually be there. It's one of the downsides of having my fingers in so many pies. You can't spend as much time on each one, so you have to surround yourself with good people."

And for the new season not only will there be plenty of new Spawn action and suspense, but also a few more good people. Namely, two new writers that have come on board and a clean slate to work from.

"John and Rebekah came on when we were doing what we call the second season, but again we literally threw out about eighty percent of that dialogue, and re-wrote it," McFarlane pauses a moment and then grins. "In the new shows we were able to say, you don't have to fix somebody else's problem, now you can create your own problems."

Besides trying to take more mature themes, these are the six shows that the new writers, John Leekley and Rebekah Bradford were actually able to start from scratch with the two of them and myself locked in a room discussing what the show's about. Last season was us going in there and rewriting a bunch of stuff from previous writers' materials."

In fact Todd is so happy with new writer John Leekley, that the two of them will be working on the next Spawn live action movie together.

"John and I plan on writing the sequel together and essentially we've got the movie all ready to go," he says. "It's in the typewriter. We're just dragging our heels a bit on the contract right now."

But in the interim, what can fans expect from season three of the HBO animated series?

"Actually," Todd is quick to point out. "We're calling it season 2B. There's 2A and 2B, but given that it's coming in 1999, the first came in '97, '98, '99, it's technically to the viewers the third segment and the third year, so it's season three to them."

Call it what you will, the new season of Spawn: The Animated Series promises to be everything the previous episodes were and more with new characters, sharper animation, and more of an emphasis on drama than comic book action.

"It's not about demons and creatures from Hell," says McFarlane as he gears up for the new batch of six episodes.

In the first two seasons HBO's Spawn series covered much of the ground addressed in the comics and the film. The focus of the episodes fell on the origin of Spawn: his life and death as Al Simmons, and his agonizing resurrection as the hell-born foot soldier Spawn. Viewers saw a gruntle-Spawn fight his way through betrayal, death and a deadly villain/tormentor in the form of the ever-lovable Clown. Now, Todd and the folks at HBO Animation take the next step in adult animation, and up the dramatic ante a notch or two.

"I would say the biggest difference you're going to see is that we're trying to pull out some of the comic book-isms, if you will, and pure fantasy stuff that was more prevalent in the first season," McFarlane comments. "The Clown is really very minor in the next six parts, and is more dealing with who Spawn is, and putting him in situations where he deals with these kids who commit a murder."

"The big difference that there's going to be, I believe, is that the animation quality has taken another leap forward, and the stories are getting more into drama and suspense instead of bang, bang shoot-em up stuff."

As McFarlane explains, the new HBO episodes will cover a wide range of fresh territory and explore whole new dimensions of Spawn.

"In 2 08 we start to get into a lot of Sam and Twitch detective stuff. In 2 09 we start to deal with some of the resolution of the bodies that have been found. 2 10 actually has a vampire in it," McFarlane confesses, "so I wouldn't say that it's completely devoid of fantasy. And 2 11 deals with the Chinese Mafia." But it's later, as Spawn uses his hell-born abilities to appear as a man that the tension really begins to thicken.

"In 2 12 there is a big push with Spawn and Grandma Blake," says Todd alluding to the developments in the story where Spawn finally comes face to face with his loved ones in human form. The transformation, described earlier, is visually stunning, and for Spawn it is a taxing and emotionally draining experience that if handled improperly, threatens his very existence.

The concept is simple, and ground-breaking at the same time: adult drama that just happens to be animated.

While sitting and talking with Todd McFarlane, one constant thought nags at you. He's got the comic books. He's got the feature length motion picture, and a regular animated series to boot, not to mention his line of action figures, music videos, cards, and games. How does he keep it all straight, and does he worry about the continuity between the films, comics and cartoons? For Todd the answer is a simple one, and it's a formula he applies to all of the Spawn mediums. He never assumes the viewer has prior knowledge of the other mediums. This way, somebody who never went to the movie, or is even aware that there's a comic book can still catch the Spawn animated show one late night and get it immediately, and say, hey this is a cool show.

"I don't want to create a thing where there's so much prior history that it bugs you down," McFarlane explains, "and makes you go, ugh, gotta be some kind of geek and know all this information. I just want to make it accessible to each medium. A movie has to have a beginning, middle and end. You have to get all of your story in two hours. With TV you can be more episodic, and you can carry things on knowing you can come back every week. In a comic you have to be a little more careful about the episodic feel because it only comes out once a month, and you don't want to drag it out too long because five or six shows will be half a year in comic book time, and only a month and a half in TV time."

Spawn has covered a lot of ground, but one animation question lingers, even begs to be answered, one last frontier. Will there ever be a full length animated Spawn movie? This is a topic that Todd and partner Terry Fitzgerald have thought about more than once.

"Terry and I keep talking about it. It's one of those things that once the opportunity stares us in the face, I know we'll seize the moment. It's a very ambitious undertaking. I want to make sure it's the right time with the right project with the right financing so we can do it right."

"But do I think America needs a PG-13 or R-rated hour and a half show? Yeah. We've got plenty of kid flicks. I'd like to see some of the kind of stuff the Japanese do in their animation. They make no bones about it. They're trying to hit the 14 and older crowd, and I think it needs to be done, whether by me or someone else, just to see if it can succeed here in America."

For the time being, Todd McFarlane seems content concentrating on what he currently has on his plate, which is plenty considering he has recently also entered the music video biz. As of the writing of this piece it has been learned that Todd has teamed up with the band Korn to produce a video based on the second single *Freak On A Leash*, from their double platinum album *Follow The Leader* (which Todd also did the cover art for). The video is directed by Todd, and produced by Terry Fitzgerald, who sat the whole thing up after meeting with Korn in the studio and becoming buddies with key record executives.

"The video picks up where the cover left off," says Fitzgerald. "It's fifty percent animation, and fifty percent live action. It's like nothing that's ever been done."

Indeed, and it's sure to get a lot of attention from MTV who have already shown tremendous interest before the video's completion. The cover Todd illustrated depicts a group of children playing hopscotch near the edge of a cliff. The video follows the action on the kids as a security guard walks onto the scene, pulls his gun and "accidentally" fires a round at a young girl. The video then follows the trail of the bullet as it passes the girl, and tears into the live action sequence produced by Dayton Faxes of Smashing Pumpkins and Oasis video fame. After a trip that borders psychedelic and nearly crosses into psychotic, the bullet returns to the animated world where it ends up in the liver of the little girl who returns the slug to the quivering security guard. Whew.

So, the Spawn comics continue to entertain and sell in tremendous numbers. The Spawn Movie enjoyed a healthy and profitable stint at the theaters and is now a popular video sale as well as rental. A sequel to the movie is all but guaranteed. The toys fly off the shelves as fast as they are stocked. And the HBO Animated series is primed and ready to enter a new season and a bright new era of Spawn history. One has to wonder if it will ever end? Does McFarlane ever imagine a time when the Spawn saga will conclude in any of the various mediums? Again, a simple and direct answer from McFarlane.

"No, not really. I know what the answer is at the end of the story," he says. "But once you write that story the gig's up and you move on. My guess is I'll do that when nobody cares about Spawn or maybe I'm completely bored and don't want to share him with anybody, but for the most part I hope I can take the answer to the grave with me and Spawn lives on."

Something tells us that Spawn will never die and even if he did, he'd resurrect from the grave again and again and again. You can't keep a good hell-spawn down after all.

The Transformation Begins This April On

HBO®

creative profile

CREATIVE PROFILE

ANTHONY BILLOTTO
McFARLANE TOYS
DESIGN DIVISION

It's a day goes by in my fabulous life without some stranger (who the hell does it on 'strange') coming up to me and asking me how we get those such really spooky-looking toys. After I [illegible] with [illegible] times I give this simple answer–"Cause the guys that make toys are the scariest lookin' bunch of sub-humans you'll ever meet."

You've already met "Happy" Andy and "Dark" Ed Frank. Now it's time for you to meet the other head honcho of our McFarlane Toys design division, "The Terror" Billotto. Remember, he has friends that break legs for a livin'.

People give us their real names that way I can give my enemies new nicknames?

[illegible]

How about your birth date. The REAL one, not the one you give to women you're lyin' to?

September 12, 1948, A.D.

What is your current base of illegal operations?

[illegible] of Bloomingdale's [illegible]

Do you have any family or just a bunch of kids [illegible]

[illegible] to say that I have a [illegible] loving wife [illegible] my brother Tom, an excell[illegible]ball, a great water [illegible] my cousin Ken who is my [illegible] Christian, the best son any father could ever want.

Give the exact details on your occupation at McFarlane Toys. You do work don't you?

[illegible]s at McFarlane Design include designing and [illegible]ic [illegible] and accessories, following production in Ch[illegible] and installation of the New York City showroom.

How would you best describe the people you work with in the design complex?

[illegible] come to mind when I think of my co-work[illegible] diverse, perverse, uncommonly talented, dedicated, creative and sexy.

Tony, have you ever wanted to shove an egg-beater [illegible] mouth and really churn it hard?

People who are above the law such as Ted Kennedy bring out the egg beater in me.

What cuss word do you most [illegible] use the most when it speaks to you? Just give us the first and last letters of the word.

Beau, Todd doesn't cuss. I don't [illegible]

What kind of music do you listen to when relaxing or fishing?

[illegible]sic rock, blues, some country and classical music when I'm [illegible]

What were your favorite toy and comic book when you were growing up?

When I was a kid we only had sticks and rocks to play with. [illegible] My favorite toys were my electric trains, my [illegible] and my model kits. My favorite comics were Archie, Superman, Batman, Classics Illustrated and the Gutenberg Bible.

What McFarlane Toys Action Figure do you think is the coolest?

My favorite figure of the present is the new Cy-Gor and my favorite line is the Dark Ages Spawn.

If you could trade your [illegible] your cheap and trashy girlfriend who would it be?

Martha Stewart.

What was the last good movie you saw?

Saving Private Ryan.

If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?

I would travel, make my friends and family as happy as I could, retire and pay for your penile enlargement operation.

What sport and sport team is your favorite?

I guess baseball [illegible] synchronized swimming and curling. The Yankees have always been my team.

What [illegible] celebrity would you like to use as a model in the next Monster Playset?

Robin Williams could be a 'toothapple' in a Headless Horseman diorama.

What do you do in your spare time when you're not kissing up to Todd?

When I have spare time, I like to fish, cook, read and listen to music.

If you could be really good looking like me, who would you want to look like?

Like you, Beau! Who else?

Who is your favorite President?

I like Gerald Ford be[illegible] when I do.

What was the last good book you read?

The *Way to the Western Sea* which is about the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Since it is well known that you have always been an avid weight lifter, what's the strongest thing you ever lifted?

I don't know about lifting, but I [illegible] pig or two in my time.

Anything you'd like to tell our readers [illegible] the ones that are still awake?

Try to enjoy the simple things [illegible] and family because pretty soon it's over.

Now that the guard has let[illegible] my weight has weird smell wh[illegible] when we will [illegible] If you have any [illegible] just drop us a line [illegible] those guys like a raw steak. Address your questions to:

Creator Profile
Beau Smith
P.O. Box 748
Cereda, WY. 25567-0748

Beau Smith
The Man Behind The Curtain

Victor Wong (Left) with Tony Billotto

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